

Sunday Message

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year B • 7 July • Psalter Week 2

REJECTED BY HIS OWN

MARK 6:1-6



In today's Gospel, Jesus returns to his hometown of Nazareth with his new family of disciples.

Much has happened since his last visit. He has shown his authority over demons, illness and death. Many have come to faith in him, especially in Capernaum, where he now lives. But, as we saw some Sundays ago, it was in Nazareth that members of his own blood family had declared he was insane and tried to stop his mission. Has anything changed? Will they and the other Nazarenes now believe in him?

As is his practice, Jesus goes to the synagogue to preach. But the locals aren't impressed. They ask pointed questions. They want to know the source of his words and deeds.

Jesus' townspeople are limited by their own narrow experience and fixed ideas. They know his family and where he came from and simply cannot believe there is anything significant about him. They describe him using the Greek word *téktōn*, which is traditionally translated as "carpenter." The word means a craftsman who works with wood or metal. Such craftsmen would have produced doors, window frames and other wooden or metallic objects. Jesus and his family would probably not have been poor, but still would have been regarded as socially inferior to the educated class of religious leaders. Simply put, the locals think Jesus is getting above his station and that there is really nothing to him. He is no different to themselves. They think that in trying to move beyond his social standing he is bringing dishonour to his family, and so they take offence at him.

Jesus' reply about a prophet not having honour in his home place may well be a proverb which Mark, Matthew and Luke have re-worked for their own use. Mark's version is very pointed. Jesus is not only rejected by his home town, but also by his natural family and relatives. In this way, Mark reminds us of the way Jesus' own family had already treated him and of his need to create a new family of disciples.

The result is that Jesus isn't able to work any significant miracle in Nazareth. His miracles require faith and this is lacking in the place where he grew up. The overall effect on Jesus is that he is "amazed" at the Nazarenes' lack of faith. "Amazement" is often people's faith response to Jesus' miracles. Now Jesus is "amazed" at the unbelief of his own townspeople. ■

DO

Make a conscious effort to be more aware of God's power at work in those around you at home and in the workplace.

PRAY

Pray for the courage to witness to the Good News without fear as Jesus did.

SAY

"Lord, help me always to speak your truth with love. Amen."

LEARN

To be a prophet is to witness to the Gospel no matter the cost.

We must never rush to judge, reject or dismiss.

The Christian is always tuned into the signs of the times.



REFLECT

According to the old proverb, familiarity breeds contempt. In other words, extensive knowledge of or close association with someone or something leads to a loss of respect for them or it. It is what Jesus experienced in today's Gospel. His own townspeople weren't interested in listening to him. After all, he was the local carpenter's son. They knew all his family and knew there was nothing special about him.

Andrei Sakharov also experienced rejection. Sakharov was a brilliant Russian scientist who helped develop the Soviet Union's nuclear programme. The Communist authorities showered him with honours for his achievements, but when he began to speak out against the bomb and against the state's heavy hand, his colleagues turned against him. They wouldn't listen to him. He was shunned. The authorities stripped him

of his honours and sent him and his equally courageous wife Yelena into internal exile in the remote city of Gorky, where he could contact no one. Sakharov was punished severely for speaking the truth. But he didn't back down and he was vindicated in the end.

There are prophets all over the world who are applauded internationally for what they have to say but who are not acknowledged or lauded at home. Think of the Pakistani activist, Malala Yousafzai, who as a schoolgirl campaigner for female education became the youngest ever Nobel Prize laureate. She was shot by the Taliban in 2012 because they didn't like what she had to say. Her own people refused to listen to her.

When we close our minds to hearing something that might be new and challenging simply because of who says

it, we are not allowing for the possibility of growth.

It happens in all walks of life. Young people will listen to the wisdom of their friends' parents but not their own parents. Older people are reluctant to hear what the young have to say because they have no experience and the old know better. The new person in the office isn't listened to because she has not been around long enough to know what makes the place tick.

Today's Gospel is a warning against falling into that trap. God may be working through the person right beside us who is all too well known to us. We must never allow arrogance or familiarity or misogyny to cloud our judgement or close our ears to the prophetic voice or to the uncomfortable truth. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Your merciful love, O God,
we have received in the midst of your temple.
Your praise, O God, like your name,
reaches the ends of the earth;
your right hand is filled with saving justice.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who in the abasement of your Son
have raised up a fallen world,
fill your faithful with holy joy,
for on those you have rescued from slavery to
sin
you bestow eternal gladness.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Ekekiel 2:2-5

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel.
The spirit came into me and made me stand up,
and I heard the Lord speaking to me. He said,
"Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites,
to the rebels who have turned against me. Till
now they and their ancestors have been in
revolt against me. The sons are defiant and
obstinate; I am sending you to them, to say,
'The Lord says this.' Whether they listen or not,
this set of rebels shall know there is a prophet
among them."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 122 (123)

Response:
Our eyes are on the Lord till he show us his
mercy.

1. To you have I lifted up my eyes,
you who dwell in the heavens;
my eyes, like the eyes of slaves
on the hand of their lords. (R.)

2. Like the eyes of a servant
on the hand of his mistress,
so our eyes are on the Lord our God
till he show us his mercy. (R.)

3. Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.
We are filled with contempt.
Indeed all too full is our soul
with the scorn of the rich,
with the proud man's disdain. (R.)

SECOND READING 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to
the Corinthians.

In view of the extraordinary nature of these
revelations, to stop me from getting too proud I
was given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan
to beat me and stop me from getting too proud!
About this thing, I have pleaded with the Lord
three times for it to leave me, but he has said,
"My grace is enough for you: my power is at its
best in weakness." So I shall be very happy to
make my weaknesses my special boast so that
the power of Christ may stay over me, and that
is why I am quite content with my weaknesses,
and with insults, hardships, persecutions, and
the agonies I go through for Christ's sake. For it
is when I am weak that I am strong.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! The Word was made flesh
and lived among us:
to all who did accept him he gave power to
become children of God. Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 6:1-6

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Mark.

Jesus went to his home town and his disciples
accompanied him. With the coming of the
sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue
and most of them were astonished when they
heard him. They said, "Where did the man get all
this? What is this wisdom that has been granted
him, and these miracles that are worked
through him? This is the carpenter, surely, the
son of Mary, the brother of James and Joset
and Jude and Simon? His sisters, too, are they
not here with us?" And they would not accept
him. And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is only
despised in his own country among his own
relations and in his own house"; and he could
work no miracle there, though he cured a few
sick people by laying his hands on them. He was
amazed at their lack of faith.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May this oblation dedicated to your name
purify us, O Lord,
and day by day bring our conduct
closer to the life of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Taste and see that the Lord is good;
blessed the man who seeks refuge in him.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, we pray, O Lord,
that, having been replenished by such great
gifts,
we may gain the prize of salvation
and never cease to praise you.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

In this hour of farewell, or, better, of leave-
taking, I repeat once more that what matters
most in this life is: our blessed Jesus Christ,
his holy Church, his Gospel, and in the Gospel
above all else the Our Father according to the
mind and heart of Jesus, and the truth and
goodness of his Gospel, goodness which must
be meek and kind, hardworking and patient,
unconquerable and victorious.

(St John XXIII: Spiritual Testament)